

AL:RTP/MEG

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

16M1090

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- against -

BONNAY BENFORD,  
also known as "Popalot,"

Defendant.

COMPLAINT AND  
AFFIDAVIT IN  
SUPPORT OF AN  
ARREST WARRANT

(18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1))

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EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, SS:

Ashley Trover, being duly sworn, deposes and states that she is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, duly appointed according to law and acting as such.

In or about and between November 2015 and June 2016, within the Eastern District of New York and elsewhere, the defendant BONNAY BENFORD, also known as "Popalot," together with others, not being a licensed importer, manufacturer or dealer in firearms, did knowingly and intentionally conspire to engage in the business of dealing in firearms, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(a)(1)(A).

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 371)

The source of your deponent's information and the grounds for her belief are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Because the purpose of this Complaint is to set forth only those facts necessary to establish probable cause to arrest, I have not described all the relevant facts and circumstances of which I am aware. Any statements attributed to witnesses are relayed in substance and in part.

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), and have been for more than three years. I am currently assigned to Squad C-13 in the New York Field Office, Brooklyn/Queens Resident Agency, which investigates violent criminal enterprises. During my tenure working for the FBI, I have participated in numerous investigations of criminal enterprises, including the Bloods gang, and of various crimes, including firearms trafficking. I am familiar with the facts and circumstances set forth below from my participation in this and other investigations, my review of the investigative file, my interviews with witnesses and from reports of other law enforcement officers involved in the investigation.

2. Since early 2015, the United States has been investigating a firearms trafficking operation that involved the purchase of firearms by “straw purchasers,” individuals who were lawfully able to purchase firearms in states outside of New York, and transfer of those firearms to the Eastern District of New York and elsewhere, where they were distributed illegally. The investigation has revealed that the gun trafficking operation was operated by members and associates of the Gangsta Killer Bloods (“GKB”), also known as G-Shine, a set of the Bloods gang that operates in the Eastern District of New York, the greater New York area and states along the eastern seaboard. The investigation has involved, among other things, review of law enforcement databases, review of social media accounts, analysis of financial and telephone records, interviews with witnesses, including cooperating witnesses, physical surveillance, execution of search warrants and seizure of firearms.

3. Pursuant to this investigation, on June 22, 2016, a grand jury in the Eastern District of New York charged MARQUEZ BRIDGES, also known as “Tega,” and

five straw purchasers by superseding indictment with conspiracy to deal in firearms and make false statements to acquire firearms, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371 and making false statements to acquire firearms, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(a)(6). See United States v. Marquez Bridges et al., 16-326 (S-1) (ARR).

BRIDGES, who has been identified as a member of GKB, was a Georgia resident who oversaw the purchase of firearms by straw purchasers in Georgia and facilitated the transfer of those firearms to other members of the conspiracy, including the defendant, who transferred the firearms to New York City for unlawful resale.

4. I believe that the defendant is a ranking member of GKB. Pursuant to a warrant issued by the Honorable Steven L. Tiscione on June 28, 2016, law enforcement agents reviewed the contents of a cellular telephone recovered from BRIDGES following his arrest for the above-described criminal conduct. That review revealed that, in or about June 2016, BRIDGES and the defendant communicated about GKB business, including the “lineup,” or ranking structure of the gang. The defendant, who identified himself as “Popalot,” informed BRIDGES about individuals who held positions of power in and out of prison. In addition, I have reviewed images on social media accounts in which the defendant is depicted using his hands to make gestures which I believe signify association and allegiance to the Bloods street gang.

5. I am informed by a cooperating witness with knowledge of the gun trafficking operation (the “CW”)<sup>2</sup> that the defendant was a participant in the gun trafficking

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<sup>2</sup> The CW has pleaded guilty pursuant to a cooperation agreement with the government to multiple felonies, including violent felonies. Prior to pleading guilty, the CW withheld information about the CW’s own criminal conduct. The CW subsequently

operation charged in United States v. Marquez Bridges et al., 16-326 (S-1) (ARR). I am informed, for instance, that in or about November 2015, the defendant travelled with other coconspirators from New York to Georgia to facilitate the purchase and transport of firearms from Georgia to New York. This information was corroborated by, among other things, cell site records relating to a telephone number that was stored as “Popalot” in the contact list of a cellular telephone recovered during the investigation. These cell site records revealed that the defendant travelled from Brooklyn, New York on November 28, 2015, arrived in Georgia on November 29, 2015 and returned to Brooklyn, New York on November 30, 2015.

6. The investigation has revealed that on or about and between November 28, 2015 and November 29, 2015 (when cell sites reveal that the defendant travelled to Georgia), at least two straw purchasers who have been charged with BRIDGES in the firearms trafficking conspiracy referenced above (see United States v. Marquez Bridges et al., 16-326 (S-1) (ARR)) (“CC-1” and “CC-2”), purchased multiple firearms. Reports from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (“ATF”) demonstrate that (1) CC-1 purchased eight firearms, including six .380 caliber pistols, in Georgia on November 28, 2015 and (2) CC-2 purchased 11 firearms in Georgia on November 29, 2015, including 10 .380 caliber pistols.

7. I am informed by the CW that the defendant facilitated the transport to New York of the firearms purchased by CC-1 and CC-2, which were illegally distributed to members of GKB, among others, in New York City.

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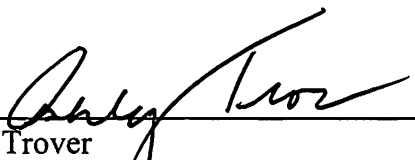
admitted to that conduct prior to CW’s guilty plea. CW has provided information that has proved to be reliable and corroborated by independent evidence. CW has been convicted of felonies in the past, including violent felonies.

8. On or about January 6, 2016, a .380 caliber gun purchased by CC-1 on November 28, 2015 in Georgia was recovered in Queens, New York. On that date, during the execution of an arrest warrant outside the arrestee's residence, law enforcement officers observed an object being thrown from a window of the arrestee's apartment. Law enforcement officers recovered the object, which was found to contain the firearm purchased by CC-1 in Georgia on November 28, 2015, which was loaded.

9. On or about June 25, 2016, the defendant was arrested and charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g) after officers from the New York City Police Department recovered a loaded .32 caliber pistol from the defendant's pants pocket. See United States v. Bonnay Benford, 16-367 (WFK). That case is pending.

WHEREFORE, your deponent respectfully requests that the defendant BONNAY BENFORD, be dealt with according to law. Your affiant further requests that this affidavit and any associated arrest warrant be filed under seal, because public filing would

give the target of this investigation an opportunity to flee, to destroy evidence and to harm or threaten witnesses.

  
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Ashley Trover  
Special Agent, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me this  
5th day of December, 2016

  
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